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SUBJECT: SUDANESE INTRANSIGENCE HOLDING UP THAI PLANNING
FOR DARFUR PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James F. Entwistle, reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

11. (C) Summary. Recent meetings regarding the planned Thai contingent to UNAMID with the Peace Operations Center and the J3 office at the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters have illustrated several obstacles to prompt deployment due to Sudanese intransigence. Continued refusal by the Sudanese government to approve a Thai site survey in Darfur has proven to be a significant hurdle to Thai achieving their previous deployment schedule. Additionally, reports of challenges for currently deployed contributing military forces in receiving their equipment, reportedly due to delays at Sudan's port, remain a key concern of the Thai military. End summary.

12. (C) Comment. While we will continue to push the Thai to fulfill their pledge to deploy to UNAMID at the earliest possible opportunity, the challenges they have described to us appear genuine obstacles to a properly planned military deployment. The most helpful assistance that could be given by the UN to facilitate the Thai deployment would be to convince the Sudanese government to allow the Thai site survey to travel to Darfur. End comment.

THAIS FACE HURDLES CREATED BY SUDANESE GOVERNMENT

13. (C) In recent meetings with PACOM and JUSMAGTHAI representatives, the Peace Operations Center and the J3 office at the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters confirmed that the Thai military remained committed to deploying to UNAMID. Planners at the Center presented detailed schedules and plans for the deployment. We were impressed with the thoroughness of the plans and analysis that went into constructing them.

14. (C) The Thai planners, however, described significant challenges that are contributing to potential delays in the deployment. First and foremost, the Thai military has not received approval from the Sudanese government for a site survey team to visit the UN-designated sector to which the Thais would deploy. A site survey is crucial as the planners at the Peace Operations Center understand from the UN that the existing Forward Operations Base (FOB) in the Thai sector cannot accommodate the planned Thai deployment. As such, the Thai will need to send an engineer team to expand and build on the existing FOB that they will occupy. This will cause further delay. The site survey is also crucial to the Thai, as they understand that they will actually need two FOBs in

their sector in western Darfur, and that they will not be able to drive between the FOBs during some parts of the year due to heavy rains.

15. (C) Further complicating the deployment are reports of logistical problems in Sudan. Allegedly, forces from other contributing nations have not been able to receive their equipment due to clearance problems at Sudan's port. The Thai continue to receive these reports and have told us that they have asked the UN for assurances that this issue has been resolved. Without such assurances that their soldiers will be able to receive essential equipment, deployment will be difficult for the Thai.

16. (C) Political considerations also appear to figure prominently in Thai deployment planning. Meetings with Thai deployment planners have pointed to a reluctance to be seen by the Sudanese government as too closely associated with the U.S. The Thai apparently sense that such association would complicate the deployment. As such, the Thai do not plan to ask for significant deployment assistance from the U.S. Conversely, the Thai have told us they are looking to the Chinese for assistance -- material and political -- in making the deployment successful.
JOHN